

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, May 6. 1708.

I Receiv'd a Letter sign'd in my own Name, a Counterfeit no doubt, for I am fully satisfy'd no Man owns the Name justly, nor does any Man covet to be call'd after the Unfortunate— However, as I am not asham'd of the Name, and hope I have no Reason, I am content to be mock'd at the Pleasure of the Party ; but this let them take by the Way with them, that tho' I am not asham'd of the Relation of any honest Man, yet I should be heartily asham'd of being related to any Man, however Great, who had so far degenerated from Justice and Honour, as to own the Principles in that Letter, and who lies in the Face of the late King, the present Constitution; the QUEEN, the Succession, and all the United Building of *Britain's* present Government.

However, I spoke something in that Paper to a Part of the Letter which concerns the present Confinement of the Gentlemen now Prisoners in *Scotland*, and the extraordinary Law made this last Parliament, for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*, so far as it relates to them.

In all Cases of such a Nature, where any Persons are fallen under the Displeasure of the Government, it has been my Way never to push on the publick Resentments, the Law is apt enough to push on it self; Justice has Iron Hands, tho' it has Leadn Wings, and I am never for encreasing Men's Afflictions; the Guilty no doubt have enough to grapple with, the Innocent have enough to support them, GOD forbid, I should add to the Burthen of Either, were they

they the worst Men in the World, much less while they are Persons of Honour and Quality, uncondemn'd and unexamined, and only taken up by Way of Precaution. But what I shall speak, shall at present relate to the Circumstances of their Confinement, more than to the Persons confin'd.

I shall not pretend to suppose, nor is it supposed even by the Government, that on Examination every Person confin'd shall appear Guilty, and GOD forbid I should think so; no question there may be some that are only number'd with the Transgressors, and who suffer for having been found in bad Company—Nay I persuade myself, that every Roman Catholick is neither in this Design, or did so much as wish its Success; I have nothing to say here, nor is it the Business of this Paper to dispute, what Men are led to merely by Principles of Religion; but this I know, there are many Gentlemen of the Roman Faith in this Island, who being able to judge rightly of their Interest as *Britains*, and the Interest of their Families, who have Estates to lose, or rather to save, are so sensible it is their true Interest to preserve the publick Peace, and how deep Sufferers they should be in all Attempts against that; however they might be pleased to have their own Religion advanced, yet can never be brought to wish for it, with all the Circumstances of Blood, Confusion and Disorder, which must necessarily follow the Attempt—And therefore I cannot believe even every Roman Catholick in this Design, I am also fully persuaded, and abundantly hopeful, that some of the Roman Catholick Gentlemen, now under Confinement, will appear to be of this Number, being Men of Honour, Estates, Experience and Sense; but of that hereafter. Much more shall I hope, that such Gentlemen among them, who have been always zealous for the Protestant Interest, and the present Presbyterian Government, that have been formerly in the like Circumstances, and in the same Place for opposing the very Party they are now suspected to assist; I say, I cannot but hope, that such as these shall on their farther Examination appear Innocent; for I cannot but believe, I shall always be able to say, in Answer to

the vile Suggestions of a Party among us, that tho' many of the Presbyterian Party oppos'd the Union, not one of them were concern'd in the Invasion—As to who they are, that are most to be suspected had a Hand in this vile Design, I shall hint at that afterward.

But now, Gentlemen, after I have suggested all this, as to the Innocence of the Gentlemen confin'd, and do heartily say, as a *Charity due to Men in Distress*, GOD send them a good Deliverance; yet the Circumstances of their respective Cases abundantly justify her Majesty and the Government in their Conduct, in this Affair of their Imprisonment, and that is my next Article.

For when I say, I hope many of them will appear Innocent, I do not suppose, the present Circumstances consider'd, that all of them might not be justly render'd suspected; some by Family, some by Principles, some by Practices, having been known to stand on a Foot differing with the present Establishment; and it is no Injustice to suspect those, who by any of these may be supposed to wish for, or be pleas'd with the Alteration.

Punishments and Sentences can only pass after positive Evidence in Fact, and so the Guilty alone can suffer; but Suspicions are grounded upon the Surface of Things, and are formed from a Judgment made on Mens Interests as well as Actions; and thus he who is by Principle a *Jacobite*, or a Roman Catholick, and so may be supposed to be in Interest oblig'd to pursue such a Design, may be justly suspected to pursue it, because all Men are supposed to pursue what is known to be their Interest.

Her Majesty therefore, who is a Princess of Native Tendernefs, can by no means be charged with Cruelty, to the Persons of the Gentlemen confin'd; and if the Gentlemen themselves would be pleased to reflect on the Cruelty of the Design it self against the whole Island, which it would take up too much Room here to enlarge upon; how they would have dethron'd our Liberty, dissolv'd our Constitution, depos'd our Sovereign, and in short involv'd us all in Blood, Misery and Devastation; It requires
a much

a much better Pen than mine to give you a lively Description of the Consequences of this Matter, at least so plain as to make you truly sensible of the thing at a Distance.

And indeed the Want of true Ideas formed in the Minds of our People of the things they must have suffer'd, and the Monsters hid in the Womb of a *French* Invasion, are the great Reasons, why the Clamours now raised at the Confinement, and other Usage of these Gentlemen, is so much carry'd on— Even just as it is the great Reason, why we are not sufficiently thankful to Almighty GOD for the Deliverance it self.

And what could the Government do less than secure the Persons of such Gentlemen, whom they might have Reason to apprehend were not their Friends; securing their Persons, if they are not Guilty, is the least Injury that could be done them in the Case of a common Calamity; for the Govern-

ment offers at nothing but a Tryal of its Friends; the Government does not pretend to judge of their Guilt, that must be determined by Law; in which I doubt not they will have Cause, whatever they thought before, to bless GOD for the Union, by which their Honour, Lives and Estates are no more at the Mercy of their private Enemies, but they will have a fair, legal, just and honourable Opportunity to vindicate themselves, have all Encouragement to clear themselves, and have their Exoneration as publick as their Misfortune— Perhaps every Body is not equally sensible of the Advantage they have by this; but I shall endeavour to make it plainer in my next, when I shall say something to the News we have of the Prisoners being sent for to *England*, and of which they make great Complaint here as an unreasonable Hardship.

MISCELLANEA.

IN all the Transactions of this great Affair in *Scotland*, it cannot be, but a Body may find out now and then a Tale to make you a little cheerful; and tho' I own, had the *French* landed, we should have laugh'd, as they say, but on one Side of the Mouth; yet now it is all over, we may take a little more Latitude with the Thing.

And, First, who can help Smiling, when we hear the Language of some of our Beloved Friends the *Jacobites*, when the Probability of the Success began to encourage them to talk.

You need not be afraid of the King, he does not come with Revenge in his Thoughts, he will do you no Harm, he will pass by former Injuries, and give a general Oblivion; the worst of his Enemies shall receive no Damage from him.

Another Gentleman to his Tenants in the *Norrb*— Now we shall have our King again, and we shall have brave Times in *Scotland*— *O but he is a Papist*, says One of the poor Men, and what will become of the Kirk? No, no, says the Laird, he will

turn Protestant, he is Young, and of a mild Temper, he will be prevail'd upon. *O but we are not sure of that*, says the poor Man again; no Matter, says my Landlord, if he should not, he engages he will preserve the *Scots Presbyterian Kirk* in its full Authority, there shall be no Alteration at all made in the Church Government; he comes with a Bible in one Hand, and a white Flag in the other; Truth in one Hand, and Peace in the other; you need not be afraid of him at all, he will make no Alteration in the least.

This leads me to tell you a good Story, which is really Matter of Fact, and pass'd on the same Occasion in the *West of Scotland*, during the Time of this Hurry.

An honest Minister in the *West* walking along the Street in the Town he liv'd in, observ'd two or three Gentlemen, whom he knew to be *Jacobites*, talking earnestly together; as he came near them, they call'd him to them, and ask'd him what News? — I know not, says the Minister, ye are most likely to hear News; Pray, what do you hear of the Invasion? Well, say the Gentlemen,

lemen, what of the Invasion? your Lawful King is coming, *that is News, is it not?* Have you seen his Declaration? Indeed no, *says the Minister*, will you shew it me? No, *says the Gentlemen*, we cannot do that, but we can tell you the Contents; He promises on the Word of a Prince, that he will make no Alteration in Church or State; that the *Presbyterian* Church-Government shall be preserv'd, the Ministers kept in their Places, and the Discipline of the Church maintain'd; that all our Privileges, Laws and Liberties shall be kept inviolate; what can ye have more? — Ah, *says the Minister*, shall I tell you a Story, and will you not be angry? *Say away*, *says the Gentlemen*, at which the Minister begins.

An unhappy Lad was a Servant to a Gentleman who had been very rakish and debauch'd, and run an unusual Length in all Manner of Crimes, that the Youth began to be very weary of his Service; it happen'd, that this Gentleman falling into a lingering Disease, and perhaps in some Prospect of Death, begun to reflect a little, and grew very pensive and melancholy, and often retir'd himself, seeking to be alone; the Boy wondering what was the Matter with his Master, and what this Alteration meant, was resolv'd to listen, and hear if possible what he was doing, which he did, and found his Master was growing another Kind of Man, and was at his Prayers; listening longer, he found him confessing his former Wickedness, and always between Sentences making Vows and Promises of Amendment and Reformation — *Ab fause Loon*, quoth the Boy, *Good God do not believe him, I ken him better than thou dost.*

The Minister made no Application of the Story, neither do I; but can any Man in his Sences believe, that upon the Arrival of a *French* Power, when all the Episcopal Party had been to be gratify'd, restor'd and oblig'd; can any Man that knows any thing of *Scotland* believe this? Not to dilate this Discourse with a Description of the Temper and Circumstances of the *Episcopal* Clergy there, but is it rational, they would content themselves to restore their Party, and not restore themselves; to erect their Temporal Friends, and see their Ecclesiastick Power still subjected to the *Presbyterian* Government, which they hate and abhor, and which Government is an Eyesore to them and their whole Party over

Britain? They may say what they please to persuade poor ignorant People of this; but if they come to say this again to us, we must say as the poor Boy did, *wildly enough*, Do not believe them, we know them better than ye do.

If I were to describe this Affair more particularly, I would tell our Friends in the *North*, and perhaps I speak more to their Knowledge than to other Peoples, you would have been more likely to have had fair Treatment and Promises observ'd from the *French*, than from the not *Jacobite* and *Episcopal* Party at Home; and let but any Man, who was then on the Spot, who was Witness to the Behaviour and Insolence of some of that Party, when they vainly thought their Day was at hand, judge with me, whether I am in the right or no.

If I may judge of them in both Kingdoms, by what I have seen; nay, if you will take their Word in their Exaltations, if you will believe what they promise, both in the Language of their Tongues, and the Language of their Actions, for Actions speak as well as Words; if, I say, these may be believ'd, the Revolution-Party can expect little Mercy from them, if ever they arrive to the Pinnacle of their Hopes.

Nor blame me for noting the *French* Usage as inferior; Give the *French* their Due, as Men of War, they often act as Men of Honour, observe Capitulations and Articles, and may be depended upon oftentimes; a *Papist* may be a Man of Honour; a profess'd *Non Jurant* in *England* I take to be an honest Man, than our conformable Traitors; our *High-Flying* mad Men, who cover their projected Mischiefs with a base Compliance, and subject themselves to the Government, that they may overthrow it; as these have no Honour in their Practice, so from them, if ever they should get uppermost, I expect no Mercy, no Quarter, no fair Treatment in the World.

I think, I need not improve this Argument to quicken us in the resisting them, for I hope, all our Eyes are open to the Necessity of that, but I turn it to the absolute Necessity of not believing their Pretences and Promises; for let them swear till they are black in the Face, let them vow to GOD or Men, that they would restore a *Jacobite* Race, and not erect a *Jacobite* Church, I should indeed say, with the Boy, Good People, do not believe them, I know them better than you do.